

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SINGAP 00281 221401Z

44

ACTION EA-14

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R 220945Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9927

INFO CANBERRA 713

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 0281

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SN

SUBJECT: ANZUK COMMANDER COMMENTS ON SOVIET NAVAL
PRESENCE AND FUTURE OF ANZUK

REF: SINGAPORE 280

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. STRAITS TIMES JANUARY 22
REPORTED OUTGOING ANZUK ZOMMANDER, REAR ADMIRAL WELLS,
(AUSTRALIAN) MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS IN FAREWELL INTER-
VIEW:

A. SOVIET PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN: "OF COURSE THERE IS
SIGNIFICANCE IN THE MOVEMENT OF POWERFUL FORCES IN
AREAS WHERE THEY HAVE NOT HITHERTO SAILED. IT IS HUMAN
NATURE TO EXPECT THE WORST. BUT OTHER NATIONS HAVE SHIPS
LIKE THAT. AMERICAN FORCES ARE IN THE SOUTHCKHINA SEA
AND THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE RUSSIAN FLEET COULD ONLY BE A
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PAGE 02 SINGAP 00281 221401Z

THREAT IF THE RUSSIAN INTENTION IS TO EXERCISE POWER. I

HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE WHATEVER OF RUSSIAN INTENTIONS."

B. ANZUK ACHIEVEMENTS: MAIN ACHIEVEMENT IS "PROBABLY JUST BEING HERE, AND THAT EACH OF THE MILITARY SERVICES HAS BEEN SEEN TO BE HERE." ANZUK FORCES HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN EXERCISING THE UNITS WHICH MAKE UP THE FORCE. THE ARMY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF EXERCISING IN THE JUNGLES OF MALAYSIA. THE AIR FORCE CARRIED OUT EXERCISES WITHIN THE INTEGRATED AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM AND THE NAVY WITH THE SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIAN NAVIES. BOTH THE SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIAN FORCES HAD NOW ADVANCED TO A STAGE WHERE ANZUK ASSISTANCE WAS MORE IN THE NATURE OF OBSERVATION AND LECTURES THAN ACTUAL COMBINED EXERCISES (SIC).

C. FUTURE OF ANZUK: THE WITHDRAWAL OF AUSTRALIAN TROOPS DID NOT MEAN THAT ANZUK WAS WINDING UP. THE "COMMAND STRUCTURE WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL NEW DECISIONS WERE MADE. NO DECISION HAD YET BEEN MADE...IN RELATION TO FUTURE AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE CHANGING ANZUK ARRANGEMENT." THE DEPARTURE OF AUSTRALIAN TROOPS WOULD REDUCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANZUK FORCES IN CERTAIN WAYS, "BUT I BELIEVE THE MAIN AIM OF THE ANZUK PRESENCE WILL NOT BE GREATLY AFFECTED BY OUR WITHDRAWAL. THE BRITISH WILL BE HERE; NEW ZEALANDERS WILL BE HERE; AND AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT GROUPS WILL ALSO BE HERE. NEW ZEALAND FORCES WILL COME UNDER SEPARATE NATIONAL COMMAND FROM JANUARY 31, BUT THEY WILL BE UNDER ANZUK OPERATIONAL CONTROL. END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: WELLS' REMARKS ABOUT FUTURE OF ANZUK ARE MISLEADING SINCE IT CLEAR FROM REFTTEL THAT ANZUK COMMAND WILL IN ALL PROBABILITY BE TERMINATED IN LATE 1974 OR EARLY 1975. MOREOVER, IT IS INCORRECT TO SAY THAT NEW ZEALAND FORCES WILL BE UNDER ANZUK OPERATIONAL CONTROL AFTER JANUARY 31, 1974. PROBABLY WELLS WAS REFERRING TO FACT THAT NEW ZEALAND FORCES WILL HAVE TO RELY ON ANZUK FORCES UNTIL LATE 1974, AND AFTER THAT ON UK FORCES TO OPERATE NECESSARY COMMUNICATIONS AND CONTROL MECHANISMS. WELLS' COMMENTS IN GENERAL APPEAR DESIGNED TO PUT THE BEST CAST POSSIBLE
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PAGE 03 SINGAP 00281 221401Z

ON CONTINUING AUSTRALIAN INVOLVEMENT IN ANZUK AND ITS LINGERING PRESENCE HERE IN LIGHT OF THE FORTHCOMING WHITLAM VISIT TO SINGAPORE EARLY NEXT MONTH.
CRONK

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